

Bloomfield Gazette.

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Are Public Schools a Failure?

The importance—the absolute necessity—of educating all the children in a republic, is generally acknowledged. The impossibility of doing this in private schools is so evident, that the respective States of this nation have established systems of Free Public Instruction.

A great amount of money has been invested in lands, buildings, furniture and apparatus; and large sums are spent annually in the payment of teachers' salaries. In this State, of about 1,000,000 inhabitants, the value of public school property is \$4,250,000; last year the expense of conducting the schools, (not including building or repairs), was \$1,767,000, almost the whole of which was spent in paying the salaries of 2,931 teachers. From this outlay of money, and the time and labor of these teachers, together with the care and earnest work of Superintendents and other officers, large results should be attained. Has this been done? There are not a few who, in answering this question, declare that our Public Schools are a failure. This cry has become so common in some quarters, that we feel called upon to notice it, and to express our conviction that such an opinion is altogether groundless. It results either from ignorance of what has been done, or from too great expectations of what could be done.

Few persons, except teachers and school officers, know the amount of labor required, and the difficulties encountered in conducting Public Schools; but to organize and establish them is a still more difficult task. In this, as in all other kinds of business, experience is necessary to success.

But it is said that our Public Schools are now well established, in good working order, and yet do not produce the results that may be reasonably expected. One complains that the children do too much marching, and not enough studying; another that too much time is spent on the intricate parts of Arithmetic, and in learning a useless list of names in Geography; another says that Reading and Writing are neglected; while others insist that Object-Teaching, Natural Science, and the like, should occupy the most prominent place in the curriculum of studies.

Without replying to each of these separately, let us look at the work the educator has to perform. Public Schools may be divided into two classes, the District and the Graded Schools. The difficulties in the way of giving a good education to the children of the district school, are the distance which many of them must walk to reach the school-house, thus making the attendance light and irregular in bad weather; the small amount of money apportioned to each district, rendering it almost impossible to engage an able and experienced teacher; and the large number of different classes that must be heard by one person, thus allowing too little time for each recitation. As long as this is the state of matters, such must be the results.

But it is from the graded schools that much has been expected and it is claimed, not realized. Here we must distinguish between city schools and those situated in the townships. The former do not generally receive the credit due them. They have a large and troublesome class to care for, from which the latter are to a great degree exempt. Even in the cities themselves there are districts in which the children make much higher attainments than in others where the teachers are equally able and faithful. This is undoubtedly due to the home influence. Much depends on the system adopted by the school officers; more on the teacher. We might here turn aside to speak of the great difficulty there exists of finding able and faithful teachers, and the reasons for this; but this question of itself would occupy more than our allotted space. We return to the subject of home influence in its bearing on school education.

In many parts of our cities, and the same may be said, to a certain degree, of our growing villages and towns, many parents do not care whether their children go to school or not. Others, by sloth, idleness, and intemperance, counteract the lessons of cleanliness, industry, sobriety and morality, inculcated in school. And yet it is no small advantage to keep away from such influences for five or six hours every day; children who would otherwise be engaged in the "mischief" which a certain notorious character always finds for idle hands to do. One great object of our Public Schools is to inculcate virtuous principles, to teach habits of order, obedience, and industry. In estimating their success, this work should have its due prominence.

Another matter not to be slightly spoken of, is the fact that many children, who would otherwise remain entirely uneducated, learn to read, so that they can understand the newspaper or magazine. This one acquirement often leads to others; and when not, it enables the possessor to know something of the leading topics of the day, and keeps him from many sins of idleness and ignorance.

According to statistics furnished by the accurate Superintendent of Newark Schools, more than half of the children who enter the primary departments leave school before they are twelve years of age. Of the rest, not one-half complete the grammar school course; while only five per cent. of the whole ever enter the High School, and only twenty per cent. of these graduate.

These statements are in some respects discouraging, and lead one to ask whether we should not resort to "compulsory education."

But the schools have done much more than keep children from idleness, and teach them to read and write; they have furnished a good education to thousands, who have never entered other schools. The chief regret is that so few will avail themselves of the opportunities offered. Where in individual instances complaint is made that the Public School is a failure, we believe that the private school is a failure to the same degree. In neither is the system always without fault, or the teacher a model of perfection. But if home influence were right, these complaints would seldom occur. This subject is of paramount importance at the present time, and must be fully discussed before the people, until they realize their true position in this regard, and become willing to do their duty. Then there will be no complaint that Public Schools are a failure.

Thinking Aloud.

WHAT a relief it is sometimes to ventilate our thoughts in the hearing of others! How refreshing to give substance and expression to our cogitations!

How common it is to find persons who are uninformed of certain matters and things which we supposed everybody knew all about! Sometimes we are surprised at ignorance of a word or term which had become so familiar to ourselves that we cannot account for any one not knowing it.

These are chance occurrences, it is true, yet by no means infrequent. They are more or less rectified by society; and yet we are not sure but the very developments of society, the rapid progress of knowledge, and the unceasing and accelerated whirl of human activities, are often the cause of the chance, if we may be pardoned the unintentional fault!

ABOUT ADVERTISING.—We wonder if our readers, after looking through our advertising columns, do not think to themselves as we now think aloud.

They doubtless notice with approval the wisdom of the business firms who have selected the GAZETTE as an important medium of bringing their business before the public; they also note the enterprise which prompts some of them to make a fuller display of their business in a liberal description of what they have, to offer the public.

Do they not also miss a number of names whose advertisement they would wish to see in the GAZETTE? Perhaps our readers can conceive of some good reason for this omission on the part of persons doing business in Bloomfield and Montclair, Newark or elsewhere, who look to the field covered by our paper for a considerable share of their patronage. We confess we fail to appreciate their wisdom and sagacity. The familiar adage—"penny wise and pound foolish"—has application here. The GAZETTE belongs to Bloomfield (and Montclair), and circulates among six to ten thousand interested readers. It is fair to believe that advertisers who continue to make themselves known in our columns will find ample returns for the small cost, and will convince our readers that they understand one of the first laws of successful trade, that of reciprocity.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH, Bloomfield, a little jealous, we suppose, of the editors of the GAZETTE for "thinking aloud," have set up a rival loud-thinker—a vociferous, sonorous, musical thinker. Though they are in point of time behind the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians in this regard, we are not sure but they will be adjudged to have exceeded their sister churches here in the superior style and tone and delivery of their striking thoughts. They are a progressive people—generally an outspoken people—and now that we shall, through the munificent liberality of our fellow townsman, Mr. Henry C. Spalding, be permitted to enjoy the musical expression of their most striking thoughts, may we not hope and believe that every note of that new church bell will be in the interest of true religion and universal liberty—of untrammelled Christian union, denominational harmony and neighborhood peace? Then will all the town "rejoice with exceeding great joy." Think aloud, thou mellifluous and significant exponent of the church's echo—Peace on earth and good will to men! We are told this bell weighs over 3,600 pounds, and cost \$1,700.

MONTCLAIR.—We invite attention to two interesting communications from citizens of Montclair, and shall be happy to have our enterprising neighbors represented in every issue of our paper. We can never be jealous of the growth of that progressive and beautiful village, but shall rejoice in her improvements, not doubting that every house built there will advantage Bloomfield also. Items and paragraphs, notices and communications will be thankfully received and published to the full extent of our space.

Neither will advertisements from her business men or subscriptions to the paper from her citizens be refused!

POLITICAL.—"What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?"—The significance of this inquiry will be better apprehended if we remember that in our country the people are sovereign. The object of this utterance will be met if our "thinking aloud" should remind the community that for some twelve years past no citizen of Bloomfield has received nomination for a County office; that

the representatives of all the towns in the county, at their recent meeting, unanimously recognized the right of Bloomfield to such preference; that one of our esteemed townsmen, at the instance of Montclair, was named as the people's candidate for the office of County Clerk; that JOSEPH BANKS REFORM, by his peculiar experience, is especially qualified for the duties of that office, and by his known industry and undoubted integrity, as well as by his *societier in moda*, has commended himself to the confidence and good-will of all classes and all parties, not only in this, but in all the towns, and is of course the one whom the people will elect by an overwhelming vote.

That's what shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor.

WANTED, DRESS-MAKERS AND SEAMSTRESSES.—We do not know how many, but judging from the complaints heard in most quarters, we should say not a few. Indeed we believe that there are many families in town, each of whom would be glad to engage the entire services of a seamstress for several months. A number of neat sewers, of industrious habits and proper manners, might in this way find pleasant homes for the winter, with suitable wages. There is also a demand for seamstresses by the day.

The few dress-makers in town are so overwhelmed with work that their engagements extend for weeks in advance. Both they and their customers would be favored by the arrival of fellow crafts-women.

From Montclair.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—One of the numerous advantages derived from the establishment of a village newspaper, is the ready and effective means afforded for the ventilation of local abuses, bringing them more directly under the eye of the community as subjects for redress. "What'er ye do shift the door, behave yersef afore folks," is an old Scottish proverb, very pithy—and whatever of hypocrisy—that leprosy of the moral man—it may be supposed to enclose, I think that that is very much qualified by the decorous manner, outwardly, and deep self-respect, inwardly, which it evidently means to enjoin.

Now, in accordance with an argument somewhat deduced from this aphorism and because the propinquity of Montclair and Bloomfield is so intimate that they may be regarded as blossoms on one bough, or "Siamese Twins," with the isthmus of conjunction daily abbreviating until the "predestined" fusion of their entities occurs! I take advantage of your recent, neat and interesting petite creation, "THE BLOOMFIELD GAZETTE," for the purpose of airing amongst ourselves one of the crying abuses of this place, and so presenting it that it may commend itself to the attention of those who may or should render some amelioration of the evil.

There is in this blooming little place, with all its soft rural attractions, its gentle, natural associations, fast rearing up a youthful band—who are anything but a band of hope, the influences to whose formation of character are neither in accord with the general surroundings of the place, "beautiful for situation," nor with the general character of the dwellers therein. Often during the past summer have the ears of those in the least fastidious or inclined to virtue and refinement, been made to tingle while passing along the streets of this village, by expressions emanating from these youthful students of depravity; and not seldom have their eyes been shocked likewise by witnessing them staggering through the village, or lying in the open air in a state of brutal intoxication, mayhap berating the passers-by with some choice patches of the blasphemy of Sodom.

The questions with us in regard to this state of affairs should be, I think: At whose door does culpability lie? What proportion of this evil does each of the responsible among us share? These questions are, I imagine, of vital importance, and should be answered by us at the tribunal of absolute justice. No one can wash his hands of the whole matter. Society is one, and no member can be disavowed from the rest. We should, then, in the attitude of repentance, ask of the Highest, in the simple and beautiful language of the prayer-book, forgiveness "for those things we did not, which we ought to have done," and not persistently maintain that selfish isolation which is in effect Cain's exclamation: "Am I my brother's keeper?" When the "still, small voice" of duty is heard aright in the calm of enlightened conscience, we must regard it, not as a sound of dulcet variation, but as the proper signal for action. Let us exert ourselves, each and all, to obey, in this instance, the behest of that Providence, which in this highly favored portion of the world, has given us the power to command our rulers. Let us speak authoritatively upon the question: What shall be done to the man who elects himself to such dishonor, as for a trivial gain to supply unfortunate youths with strong drink! holding the intoxicating glass to their heads before they know of improving knowledge much more than to discern between their right hand and their left. Let us, in a word, sift this whole matter, do what we can to stop the evil, and do what we can to save, if possible, those premature wrecks of humanity.

Montclair, Sept. 21, 1872.

At the Annual Meeting of "The Mabel Society," held Oct. 7th, the following officers were elected for the coming season of 1872 and 1873: Willard Richards, President; F. O. Pierson, Vice-President; Dr. Chas. H. Bailey, Secretary; Geo. A. Zabripkie, Treasurer.

A Word for Broad Avenue.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—While public attention is attracted toward the Telford pavement which is putting down on the Bloomfield Avenue, and many people are felicitating themselves thereat, let us look at some of the other roads which are undergoing, or have undergone repairs in the old-fashioned way.

Take the Paterson Road from the Post Office to Bay Lane, in the "Morris Neighborhood;" examine it thoroughly within those limits, and with one exception it will be difficult to realize that a considerable amount of work has been done, and money spent upon it during the summer; certainly enough to make a good highway, instead of the most miserable apology for a road that ever disgraced a suburban neighborhood.

Where does the money go to? The tax payer when he takes up his tax list, finds staring him in the face this notification: "Road Tax 48 cents on \$1 of Township Tax." He pays his assessment, and if he has any desire to know how roads are made, he can inspect them occasionally; but if from personal observation, he comes to any other conclusion than that the work is imperfectly and unsatisfactorily performed, he will prove an exception to the majority of the citizens of this community. I do not wish to be misunderstood, I have every respect for the gentlemen whose business it is to repair the roads and highways; but if other streets in the town are no better than the one I have reference to, it is obvious that somebody only partially understands his business. Between Warren Baldwin's and the Post Office, Broad Avenue for the most part is as bad as it has been at any time within the last three years. The same protruding bowlders and the deep-worn and mud-filled ruts, appear in precisely the same localities they occupied before repairs commenced. The low places are low yet, and the high ones high yet; where the water stood last fall, it will stand this fall, and in all respects the road will continue to be the aggravating, disgraceful, disheartening nuisance it always has been. There can be no change for the better until it becomes generally understood, that there is as satisfactory an affinity between sand and water for glue making purposes, as there is between mud and stones for substantial road work.

Rough stones piled in the middle of the street and covered with mud taken from the gutters, will not make a good road. A dry porous material that will permit the water to percolate through it, like the sandstone gravel of which there is an abundance in this vicinity, is admirably adapted for making a dry, solid road bed, while the cost of hauling and putting down where required, should not greatly exceed the cost of any other material; but suppose the increased expense amounted to 50 per cent. of the original expenditure, how much better to lay out now, and once for all, than to keep up this continual drain upon the people's pockets, without any satisfactory exhibit. Let us have a change for the better.

Our Subscription List.

It is not pleasant for us to be speaking of ourselves; perhaps it would not be necessary if our paper were more meritorious and attractive. But we are inexperienced, and our paper is a recent enterprise. We are acquiring our new education as rapidly as possible, and it is but honest to say (in a whisper, if you please), that we find difficulties which we did not look for, cares that are exceedingly onerous. We will be candid enough, however, to say that we also meet with daily evidences of an increasing interest in our paper, and a generous appreciation of our humble endeavors. We have nothing to complain of, but much to admire in the helpful support so gracefully rendered by many, and the patient forbearance exercised by all. It will not be deemed invidious if we name in this connection, as preeminently valuable, the thoughtful interest and assiduous efforts of Mr. Horace Dodd to further this enterprise.

It is all-important that our subscription list be increased. It is not enough that the paper is sold by the number; that is always uncertain and attended with more trouble and loss to us. We want a regular subscription list of at least 800 in Bloomfield. (In Montclair we have a respectable list which is constantly increasing. We have also numbers in Newark, New York, Brooklyn and elsewhere. As soon as the subscription list will justify it, we will publish the paper weekly.

Assessments.

In making assessments for taxation, it is a matter of great importance that real estate should be valued correctly. Every year the taxes become heavier, in consequence of the increased amounts spent for roads and schools, as well as for other purposes; and, consequently, the attention of tax payers is more carefully directed to the question of just and equal taxation.

In townships the assessments are made by a single Assessor; his action is reviewed by the Township Committee; finally the Committee of Appeals decide on all cases of dissatisfaction. This satisfies neither owners nor those engaged in fixing the value. It has been suggested that instead of this complicated system, three Assessors be appointed, one executive, two advisory; and that they be chosen from different parts of the township. After they have fixed the values, let certain days be appointed when the books can be examined, and where not satisfactory, the Assessors shall reconsider the case. We call attention to this subject at this early

day, that our citizens may consider and discuss the matter, and if thought best, prepare to make application next winter for the necessary legislation.

Obituaries.

We copy the following notice from the *Presbyterian*, of the death of a youth of great promise, whom many in this community will remember as a bright-eyed boy, in the flush of health, during the pastorate here of the Rev. Dr. Newlin. "Ellis James, son of the Rev. E. J. and Kate Newlin, fell asleep in Jesus on the 6th of September, in Wilmington, Del., in the seventeenth year of his age. During all his sickness his memory was perfect, the mind unclouded. His religious experiences, the remembrances of which are so precious to those who ministered to him, were evoked by no thought or fear of death. God, as the source of all power—natural and spiritual—his infinite mercy; Jesus as the only and all-sufficient Saviour; and the value of a life fully consecrated to his service—these occupied his attention. The tenderness, simplicity, and sincerity of his love to, and trust in, the dear Lord, as he always spoke of him, evinced the presence of the blessed Spirit. As loving hearts commended him to a Saviour's welcome, he passed from earth peacefully, without pain or struggle, into heavenly rest."

We are called upon also to record the death, on the 11th inst., in Brooklyn, of Mr. Wm. Sherwood, well-known in our town, as the son of Rev. Jas. M. Sherwood, formerly pastor of the Presbyterian Church in this village. The funeral services were held at his late residence in Brooklyn, and the remains were brought hither and buried in our cemetery on Monday, in presence of a large company of mourning relatives and sympathizing friends, and a number of clergymen. At the grave the Rev. Dr. Newlin and the Rev. Dr. Kennedy conducted the religious exercises. It is comforting to learn that this sore trial is alleviated by the assurance that the departed is now happy with the Lord. Mr. Sherwood had been married less than a year, and leaves a widow and fatherless infant to mourn their untimely loss.

On Friday of last week, the infant son of Phoebe W. Lyon was killed by a train of cars, approaching the Bloomfield Depot. The nurse in charge of the child had it in its carriage on the platform. Removing her hands from the carriage to adjust her bonnet, the wind instantly set the little vehicle in motion, unobserved by the nurse, and precipitated the carriage and child off the platform, and was instantly killed by the resistless train.

The funeral services on Monday at the residence of the grandfather, Wm. P. Lyon, in presence of a concourse of sympathizing friends, were conducted by Rev. Mr. Knox of Bloomfield, and Rev. Dr. Thomas S. Hastings of New York, in a very touching and impressive manner.

General Grant.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—During the war, I was associated with an officer of the Regular Army. He visited Washington and witnessed the review of Sherman's army. After his return, I enquired the news: "Doctor, I have seen two men that Washington has not and never can spoil. These men are Abraham Lincoln and General Grant." This gentleman assisted in making General Grant President, having mustered him into the United States service as Col. Grant, of an Illinois regiment. He also mustered Col. now General Logan, Senator from the State of Illinois. This officer was also a class-mate of General Grant's at West Point.

A few days since I met a lady that Land my family have known intimately for some years. She remarked, "I have been for five winters with my husband at Washington. I have attended many state dinners at the White House, along with my husband have seen six or eight different kinds of wine on the table, and have never seen General Grant take a glass." Again, "On Sunday morning, he let sunshine or stormy, or pouring down rain, General Grant is always in his seat at church." Such reliable testimony is positive commendation to my mind. McD.

Colored Sunday-School again.

I do not wish that you should occupy too much space in the columns of the GAZETTE about one Sunday-school, but as this paper is destined to be of historic value to Bloomfield, I ask you to allow me to add to the favorable impression made by X. Y. Z., as well as by the previous communication of J. H., in regard to this union enterprise, as I am able to furnish the reliable particulars and early record which those writers could not give, and at the same time mention names of a number of the laborers in that good work whom all delight to honor.

The first Colored Sunday-school in Bloomfield was held in 1830, in the kitchen of General John Dodd's house, known as the Brick House, now the Bakery. Miss Charlotte Dodd was the leading spirit, assisted by Mr. Jotham Johnson, a young man of much promise, but who died at the early age of nineteen. The school was held there about two years, and then removed to the Academy, under the Superintendence of Philip Hay, Festus Hanks, and J. Adams. The teachers were the Misses Charlotte, Phoebe, and Louisa Dodd; Jane, Sarah, and Ann Armstrong; Keziah, and Emeline Ward, and Catherine K. Dodd. Of this number there are still living, Mrs. Phoebe Frame, Mrs. Catherine K. Davey, and Miss